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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1421ST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 14 July 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea)

- Question of Gilbraltar
- Question of Western Sahara
- Report of the Pacific Regional Seminar to review the political, economic and social conditions in the small island non-self-governing territories, held within the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 8 to 10 June 1993

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- Reports of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance

  Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands

  Question of Pitcairn

  Question of St. Helena

- Question of dissemination of information on decolonization

- Organization of work

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

QUESTION OF GIBRALTAR (A/AC.109/1164)

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform members that the delegation of Spain has indicated its wish to participate in the Committee's consideration of this question. In accordance with established practice, if I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee accedes to that request.

It was so decided.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Fernández-Pita (Spain) and members of his delegation took places at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: In connection with the consideration of this item, I wish to inform the Committee that the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, the Honourable Joe Bossano, has expressed the wish to make a statement. Subject to members' consent and in accordance with standing procedure, I suggest that the Committee invite him to make a statement.

It was so decided.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Joe Bossano, Chief Minister of Gibraltar, took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chief Minister of Gibraltar.

Mr. BOSSANO: I wish to place on record my appreciation for the opportunity, once again this year, of addressing the Committee. I also wish to place on record the fact that my appearance before this Committee in July last year was given wide publicity in Gibraltar and warmly welcomed by all sectors of the community.

As I stated last year, my peoples look to this Committee as its natural protector on the question of decolonization and in the defence of its right to self-determination. We also feel that it is only right and proper that we should have the opportunity to bring to the Committee's attention those events

(Mr. Bossano)

which we, the colonial people, consider important and not just those that, in the view of the administering Power, may be relevant.

One such development has been the creation of a grass-roots movement, the Self-Determination Gibraltar Group, engaged in publicizing and promoting the right to self-determination of the people. The Group consists of ordinary citizens from all walks of life and is established with the sole purpose of ensuring that the right of the Gibraltarians to determine their future is recognized.

Within Spain there is also increasing public awareness, although there is no majority support for the concept. Recently, I was invited by the University of Cadiz to address the student body and was given the opportunity of explaining how we Gibraltarians feel about the need to emerge from colonialism by exercising our right to self-determination.

Today in democratic Spain, it is possible to express such views. Perhaps a clear indication of this was the establishment last year by Spanish citizens of a non-governmental organization in Spain known as La Asociación Española de Amigos de Gibraltar, officially registered with the Spanish Ministry of the Interior. The objective of the Asociación is to promote within Spain greater understanding of the identity of the people of Gibraltar and their aspirations. This they have been doing by lobbying political parties in Spain, organizing debates and promoting media coverage.

On 7 August 1992, in an article in the influential El País, Professor Jesús Mosterín of the University of Barcelona argued that:

> "the hypothetical annexation of Gibraltar against the wishes of its inhabitants would be a flagrant violation of the democratic values on which the modern Spanish State bases its Constitution".

(Mr. Bossano)

This newspaper has on a number of occasions urged the Spanish Government in editorials to recognize the desirability of entering into direct dialogue with the Government of the people of Gibraltar.

In an opinion poll conducted by the Institute of International Affairs and Foreign Policy of the Complutense University of Madrid, 24.7 per cent of the respondents favoured acceptance of the right to self-determination for the Gibraltarians. Unfortunately, 30.8 per cent still favoured the annexation of Gibraltar. However, it is worthy of note that this latter figure had been 44.2 per cent in a similar survey conducted in 1991.

As a member of Government, I can report an important move in developing links with other neighbouring cities in Spain. This is the creation of the Economic Coordination Council. I have a copy of the statutes of that Council, which I shall leave with the Secretariat. The aims of the Council are to establish and promote economic cooperation and development in Gibraltar and the neighbouring part of southern Spain; to undertake projects or studies for the creation and expansion of economic activities in the region; and to seek funds for financing such projects, studies or activities from international agencies and private investors. The Council now includes all the municipal leaders of the surrounding towns and cities of Algeciras, La Linea, Tarifa, Castellar, San Roque, Los Barrios, Jimena, and Ceuta on the north African coast. Meetings were held in January and May this year in Spain and in Gibraltar, when an agreement was signed to promote joint ventures with Spanish and Gibraltar private enterprises. Another meeting is scheduled to be held in September in the town of Ceuta.

Where does all this leave us? I would not wish to mislead the Committee into thinking that the problem of Gibraltar's decolonization is on the brink

(Mr. Bossano)

of being resolved. But there are clearly some signs indicating that meaningful dialogue may be more probable in the future than it has been in the past. I have to stress that the people of Gibraltar has to be a primary player in any new initiative and cannot be relegated to a subsidiary or indeed subservient role.

There is another side to the story of the developments of the past 12 months. It is a less encouraging side, perhaps, which may be due to the fact that it is easier to make headway at the grass-roots level than it is at the level of Governments of nation States, or perhaps to the fact that the latter are constrained by established conventions of international diplomacy to reiterate their historical positions. Be that as it may, I must draw the Committee's attention to the statements of the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Spain.

In September 1992, subsequently to my previous appearance before this Committee, Mr. Javier Solana Madariaga, Foreign Minister of Spain, addressed the General Assembly. He said:

> "I wish to restate my Government's determination to continue, with dedication and in a constructive spririt, the negotiating process with the United Kingdom established by the Brussels Declaration of 27 November 1984, bearing in mind the doctrine of the General Assembly that this is not a case of self-determination but a situation that affects the territorial integrity of Spain." (A/47/PV.13, p. 32)

Mr. Douglas Hurd also addressed the General Assembly in September, but made no reference to Gibraltar. I would not wish this Committee to misunderstand this fact as evidence that the United Kingdom agrees with the interpretation of the doctrine of the General Assembly in respect of Gibraltar as described by Mr. Solana.

(Mr. Bossano)

Her Majesty's Government has consistently repeated to the Gibraltarian people, to the British Parliament and to the Spanish Government that it stands solemnly by the Preamble to the 1969 Gibraltar Constitution that the people of Gibraltar will not pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes.

Mr. Solana ended his reference to Gibraltar by saying that the colonial status of Gibraltar is a status that is clearly anachronistic and inappropriate to the times in which we live. I remind the Committee that this is in fact a repetition of a phrasing used by His Majesty the King of Spain who, in his own address the previous year, introduced the concept of finding a solution "compatible with the times in which we live" (A/46/PV.24, p. 6). We in Gibraltar certainly cannot understand the doctrine of the United Nations as regards decolonization - "compatible with the times in which we live" - in any other way than an exercise in self-determination. I shall expand on this view at a later stage.

Earlier this year, on 1 March 1993, Mr. Douglas Hurd and Mr. Javier Solana met in Madrid, after a gap of two years, as part of the Brussels process. The meeting was followed by a press conference, and I wish to draw the Committee's attention to some of the answers given by Mr. Solana and to express my Government's views on these answers.

In answer to a question about whether the people of Gibraltar had the right to self-determination, he said no. He said:

"The subject of self-determination, of the sovereignty of Gibraltar, falls outside the sphere of what Spain is willing to consider."

Well, first of all, we cannot have dialogue on the basis that we have to consider the territorial claim of Spain, which we reject, but we have to

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consider it because, otherwise, how can one have dialogue? But they will not consider our claim for self-determination. They can reject it, but considering it is the basis for dialogue. One cannot have dialogue unless one is willing to consider, howsoever it may be anathema, the opposite point of view.

He then want on to say:

"Right now, the citizens of Gibraltar are British citizens and in the future they can only be Spaniards, so the process of self-determination from the Spanish perspective is beside the point."

Well, if the basis for Spain's rejection of our right to self-determination is that we are British citizens and can only be Spaniards, then we have to say to Mr. Solana that we have now proved our case for self-determination. We are not British citizens. We are British Dependent Territories Citizens and never since the time of Mr. Castiella in 1964 has it been suggested that we would have to change our nationality and become Spaniards whenever we should cease to be British Dependent Territories Citizens. That has never been the premise upon which Spain has questioned our right to self-determination.

(Mr. Bossano)

Because what Spain has said all along is that we had a right to dispose of our souls, but we did not have the right to dispose of our homes. Therefore we could choose whatever nationality we wanted, but we could not determine the sovereignty of the Territory, because sovereignty of the Territory belonged to the British Government and not to inhabitants of Gibraltar. That is the essence of the Spanish case. So the nationality of the inhabitants does not enter into the question of self-determination.

So we can only assume that Mr. Solana was badly briefed when he said that, and that it does not reflect what would be a retrograde step on the Spanish approach to the question of Gibraltar's decolonization.

Let me say that, in seeking to put the record straight by referring to his statements, I do so without any spirit of animosity towards Spain or towards Mr. Solana himself.

Explaining the strategy, he said that what Spain intended to do was to carry on attempting to convince us, emphasizing either persuasion or pressure depending on how the process progresses. Again, we have to say that we reject totally this concept of the carrot and the stick. We are a mature people. We do not need a carrot-and-stick approach. We can be convinced by appeals to our intellect, but not by threats or enticements.

Let us go on with the replies given by Mr. Solana at that last meeting, which, I again remind the Committee, is the meeting between the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and the Foreign Secretary of the Kingdom of Spain after an interruption of two years, based on the negotiating process recommended by the United Nations. In answer to a question from a member of the press as to whether Mr. Solana would consider a tripartite meeting involving Britain, Spain and Gibraltar as one of the ways of proceeding forward, he said:

(Mr. Bossano)

"We understand the relations between Spain and Great Britain must be bilateral. Our on part, we have no problem with incorporating representatives of Gibraltar in the British delegation."

That is not in keeping with our times, nor is it in keeping with the role of a colonial leader in a dependent Territory. I cannot, as he suggests, be incorporated, as I explained last year. And I am sorry that even though, as I am certain, my contribution was brought to his attention, Mr. Solana has not really given any indication that he accepts the inescapable logic of my argument.

How can I sit down to talk about my decolonization in the capacity of representative of the delegation of the administering Power that is supposed to be decolonizing me? How can I be expected to do that? So this is what they have invited me to do, and they have no objection. Of course they have no objection! Because if I were willing to do that, I would, in my view, be accepting de facto that I am not a Gibraltarian - that I am an expatriate Englishman occupying a piece of Spanish land. That is not my view of what I am or what my homeland is.

If we are going to have the constructive spirit to which Mr. Solana referred in September 1992, if we are going to be in step with the times in which we live - something that both he and His Majesty King Juan Carlos referred to in their respective addresses to the General Assembly - then we must have some forum that accepts that the voice of Gibraltar must be a voice unrestrained by being part of a delegation of anyone else. It must be a voice that is free of any constraints - free of the claims of Spain, free of the Spanish understanding of the United Nations resolutions and free of the British Government's interests as the administering Power.

(Mr. Bossano)

Gibraltar can participate in discussions on its future decolonization only in a forum where it is able to say what its people want. The fact that what we want may be considered difficult to implement, unacceptable to Spain, or even to be a right we do not have because of the Treaty of Utrecht does not mean we cannot express it. We must have the right to express it. We must have the right to say to other people, "You should consider what we are saying if you expect us to consider anything you say. It doesn't mean we are going to say yes, and it doesn't mean you are going to say yes".

Turning now to my previous reference to how we Gibraltarians understand the doctrine of the United Nations, I will refer to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Operative paragraph 2 of that resolution states:

> "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

And then operative paragraph 6 states:

> "Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

That clearly means that there is a constraint in exercising the right if its exercise would lead to the fragmentation of existing Member States. Well, Spain is a State Member of the United Nations, but Gibraltar was not part of it when Spain became a Member. Spain, as a Member State, would not be dismembered were we to exercise our right to self-determination. And that is because in 1704, when Spain was dismembered, the United Nations did not exist. That was when we were last part of a Member State. Therefore we would not be creating two new United Nations Members out of one by exercising our right to self-determination, which is at the very root of the constraint.

(Mr. Bossano)

We saw new Members join the United Nations in 1992 and 1993. We saw the right to self-determination exercised, not, perhaps, in a colonial situation, but we did see it; for instance, with the Czech and the Slovak Republics amicably dismembering and forming two new nations where there used to be one. We also saw it with Slovenia, Croatia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Now these situations are non-colonial and therefore not within the parameters of the Committee of 24, but none the less the Committee cannot ignore them; they fall within the framework in which the General Assembly operates in accepting new Members created by the exercise of the right to self-determination in federal systems that are breaking up. Are we saying that the Soviet Union was entitled to break up into its constituent members and Russia is entitled to be now a nation in its own right, but that the people of Gibraltar do not have the right to decide for themselves what they want to do because in 1703 Gibraltar was part of Spain?

We are surrounded by examples in which the relevance of fragmentation and the breakup of existing States is palpable, and yet it is accepted. And why is it accepted? Because, ultimately, the principle of people determining democratically and freely what they want for themselves must be paramount - not because the United Kingdom says so, or even because the United Nations resolutions say so, but because that is an inalienable right for which people have given their lives since the dawn of humankind. And that is why neither Spain, the United Nations or the Committee of 24, with due respect to everyone concerned, can take away from us something that all human beings are born with - from the time they open their eyes and from the moment they learn to speak and use the word "freedom."

(Mr. Bossano)

I submit that that is the only way resolution 1514 (XV), on the right to self-determination, can be interpreted: the exercise of that right is constrained if the result is a new State hived off from an existing State. But Gibraltar is not such a new State.

The resolutions of the General Assembly and the decisions of this Committee could not have been drafted on the premise that the restoration of the territorial integrity of Spain as it was in 1703 overrides the right of Gibraltarians to self-determination in 1993. Otherwise, Gibraltar would become a Spanish colony on ceasing to be a British one.

Even when people are taken over forcibly to restore territorial integrity, for example, in Western Sahara and in East Timor, the fact that the wishes of the people have been overruled has been condemned by the United Nations: we saw that today in this Chamber. Where there are competing territorial claims, the United Nations encourages discussion of that claim; quite rightly, but not on the basis that territorial integrity is paramount. If the process of discussion with Spain is to develop, then there is a need to have a clear interpretation of the United Nations resolutions.

Gibraltarians cannot abdicate their right to self-determination the moment we participate in a discussion over our future. We look to the United Nations as the body that will protect us. Rich and powerful nations cannot have the right to overrule the wishes of the small and the weak. The problems may be difficult to resolve, as we have seen over Bosnia, but the key principle must be that the wishes of the people have to be recognized and have to be defended.

(Mr. Gossano)

Mr. Chairman, may I remind your Committee of the first decision taken by it on the question of Gibraltar? On 16 October 1964, the Special Committee made the following statement as a consensus:

> "The Special Committee ... states that the provisions of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples is fully applicable to the territory of Gibraltar",

and went on to say that:

> "The consideration of these statements led the Special Committee to note the existence of a disagreement, even of a dispute, between the United Kingdom and Spain over the status and the situation of the Territory of Gibraltar." (A/AC.109/PV.291, p. 36)

At the time, the response of Mr. King, the representative of the United Kingdom, was to say:

> "My Government cannot accept that there is a dispute in this Committee about the status of Gibraltar." (ibid., pp. 38-40)

He also said:

> "My Government's policy will continue to conform with the principle of self-determination. My Government does not accept that there is any conflict between the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht and the application of the principle of self-determination to the people of Gibraltar." (ibid., p. 41)

That was said a long time ago.

On 16 December 1965, the General Assembly, by resolution 2070 (XX), on a report from the Fourth Committee, invited the Governments of Spain and of the United Kingdom to begin without delay the talks envisaged on 16 October 1964

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by this Committee. That is the genesis of the talks that have periodically taken place between the two Governments.

Notwithstanding the statement by Mr. King, the existence of the talks is de facto recognition of the existence of a disagreement, even a dispute, with Spain. However, we reject the premise that recognizing that there is a disagreement with Spain axiomatically invalidates the full application to Gibraltar and its people of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

In October 1990, the United Kingdom informed the Fourth Committee that the 58 inhabitants of the Pitcairn Islands had the right to independence, all 58 of them. In December 1990, the General Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Pitcairn to self-determination and that it was in conformity with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which fully applied to the Territory. It would be absurd in the extreme to suggest that, had the Pitcairn Islands formed part of some other State in 1703, the same sacred right to independence recognized in 1990 would have been denied to its people.

We Gibraltarians are committed to the eradication of colonialism; we demand our right as a colonial people, and seek the protection of the Committee in ensuring preservation of this right. We recognize, at the same time, that there is a disagreement, indeed a dispute, with Spain which places a constraint on our ability to exercise our rights and that this constraint has to be addressed by a process of dialogue in which we are entitled to recognition of our separate identity as a people.

I have hopes that the evolution of new attitudes in Spain towards Gibraltar will make such a process of dialogue and reconciliation easier to

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achieve. I trust that I have been able to indicate to the Committee some early signs that this may be happening, by reference to the events of the past 12 months. I believe that this is in part a reflection of my request to the Committee a year ago to use its good offices in helping to bring about a climate over this dispute that will enable the decolonization of Gibraltar to proceed in a manner consistent with upholding the sacred right to freedom and self-determination for which the Committee is justly famous in the historic task of the eradication of colonialism in which it has been engaged.

I thank you once again, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee, for the time you have allowed me, and I shall be happy to answer any question you or any other member of the Committee may now wish to put to me.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee, I thank the Chief Minister of Gibraltar for the information he has furnished to the Committee. Certainly, the wishes and the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories must be regarded as paramount.

Are there any members of the Committee who wish to raise any questions?

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate Mr. Joe Bossano on the outstanding statement he has just made regarding the situation in the Territory of Gibraltar since the last time he came to describe it to us, last year.

(Mr. Diarra, Mali)

Before I come to the substance of my statement, I should like to congratulate Mr. Bossano on his re-election in the general elections in 1992.

From the working paper that has been circulated to us on the situation in the Territory since the last time the Committee studied it, my delegation has noted certain points that give cause for satisfaction and on which the Government of the Territory should be congratulated: here I am thinking particularly of the growth in per capita gross domestic product, which is at a rather high level; I am thinking also of the Territory's ability to attract foreign investment, specifically as a result of the Territory's policy of incentives towards that end. I am thinking of the Territory's job creation policy, and first and foremost of its policy on unemployment, and also about its housing policy and health and nutrition conditions in the Territory. These are all points - not to mention education, which is also important - on which we think the local Government should be encouraged to continue along the same lines it has been following up till now.

We heard in Mr. Joe Bossano's statement on the status of the Territory how he spoke of the need for our Committee and the United Nations to affirm the right to self-determination, which is an inalienable right for the people of Gibraltar as it is for any other people; he spoke also of the need for the Government that he represents to take part in the talks now under way not as a part of a delegation but as a separate entity, a third party in the consultations.

In the light of all these factors, my delegation has two questions to ask. The first question is to ask what is the current status of the consultations that began in Brussels on 27 November 1984 between the Spanish and the British authorities - I should have liked to ask this question of the

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authorities in question, but as the Chief Minister is here, I have the opportunity to ask him directly. So, what is the current status of these consultations? How far have they got?

My second question - which is more a comment - is about what is to happen to those consultations in future: I ask because, if the people of Gibraltar request a strict application of the principles of the Declaration in resolution 1514 (XV), what will happen is that a process will already be under way which our Committee has always been pleased to encourage, and then what will happen to the consultation process?

Those are the two questions my delegation wished to put to the Chief Minister; we reserve the right to speak again later to ask other questions or make other comments.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall call on Mr. Bossano, if he wishes to respond.

Mr. BOSSANO: I am delighted to have the opportunity to deal with the questions put by the representative of Mali and, at the same time, I wish to thank him for his words of encouragement for the work my Government is doing.

Perhaps I should draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that all the progress - as I think I made clear last year - is actually progress produced by our own labours. The administering Power is not contributing in any way to any of the things that are included in the report as achievements that have been brought about within the social structure of Gibraltar.

Today, the United Kingdom defence presence in Gibraltar, which I think was something that worried delegates when the Committee first looked at this situation in the 1960s, accounts for no more than 12 per cent of our gross domestic product.

(Mr. Bossano)

The Brussels process, if members would like me to give them a totally honest answer, has been going nowhere since the day it was signed. That is the truth. It went into complete limbo for two years; it has been reactivated this year in the first meeting between Mr. Solana and Mr. Douglas Hurd.

We understand the difficulty that there is both for the administering Power, which is a signatory of the Brussels Declaration, and for the Kingdom of Spain, in departing from the existing forum, simply because it was conceived as a bipartite rather than a tripartite environment and does not conceive of the possibility of our taking part.

I have made it absolutely clear that whereas we do not have a difficulty with engaging in dialogue with our neighbour, it is a matter of fundamental principle for us that we cannot be deemed to be a representative of the colonial Power in that dialogue. I think the most optimistic gloss that I can put on the present state of the Brussels process is that the views that I am expressing here have been transmitted semi-officially, via the United Kingdom, to the Kingdom of Spain, and I know that some thought is being given as to whether the process that exists at the moment can be developed into something that would meet the aspirations of Gibraltar if Gibraltar is going to be a part of it.

I think, frankly, that a wide cross-section of modern Spain understands today that there is no question of seeking to impose a solution on us, whatever formal positions may have been taken in the past, and therefore I am not entirely despondent about the possibility of developing something out of what is already in place. But I take it very much to heart that, if we feel we are knocking on a closed door, I may have to come and say to the Committee,

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"Well, look, let us all put our cards on the table, and if you tell me straight to my face that there is no room in the family of nations for the people of Gibraltar - who have the same aspirations and the same rights as many of you had before you took off the chains of colonialism - then I shall save my air fare from Gibraltar to New York"*.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): I have listened to the reply just given by the Chief Minister.

I have two further questions, the first of which - which is more a comment - relates to the political status of the Territory, while the second has to do with the domestic political life of the Territory.

I seem to recall from the working paper submitted to us that the position of the administering Power has been that, regardless of the level of the negotiations, the administering Power would never accept that the fate of the Territory should be determined without taking account the point of view and the opinions of the people of the Territory. Is that not a position that reassures the local Government of Gibraltar? That is my first question, which relates to the future status of the Territory.

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* Mr. Bangali (Sierra Leone), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Diarra, Mali)

The second question, regarding political developments in the Territory, relates to paragraph 10 of the working paper, where I read that the minority party, the Gibraltar National Party, had asked that the Constitution of Gibraltar be reviewed and amended in the following areas: the appointed members of the House of Assembly, the Governor's reserved powers and the electoral legislation.

Would the purpose of the relevant amendment be to increase or decrease the powers reserved for the Governor? What is the position of the majority Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party with respect to the amendments requested by the opposition?

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Chief Minister wish to comment?

Mr. BOSSANO: The reserved powers set out in the Constitution are as unacceptable to us as they are to the Gibraltar National Party, one of the opposition parties. Thus, there is no disagreement between us on the direction in which changes in the Constitution should go. We included this matter in our election manifesto and have raised it with Her Majesty's Government. We are engaged in discussions with Her Majesty's Government in order to advance, within the existing colonial relationship, with respect to the devolution of power.

Without a doubt the Constitution contains some unacceptable features. For example, under the Constitution the ruling organ is the Gibraltar Council: the Executive Council, which is the equivalent of a cabinet. This includes representatives of the military, which might have made sense in the 1960s when the military was 65 per cent of the economy, but which hardly makes sense when it amounts to 12 per cent. In fact, at a recent public meeting in Gibraltar I argued that by the criterion of his contribution to the economy

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the general manager of one of our local supermarkets might have a greater right to be in the Cabinet than the head of the military. That graphically conveys how we in the Government feel about this.

Hence, we are seeking changes to make the Constitution more democratic and less colonialistic. In fact, if we look at the letter of the Constitution we see that the reserved powers of the Governor are absolute. There is a division between the elected Government and the colonial Power with respect to "defined" and "non-defined" matters, and there is a clause that says that, in the final analysis, whether a matter is "defined" or "non-defined" is to be an absolute judgement of the military Governor. Basically, this means that if a problem is going to cost money the British Government usually decides it is my job, and if it is something they think could give them a headache or embarrass them, or if they think I am going to step out of line, they overrule me and say that it is part of their responsibility as colonial Power - a situation that, I am sure, will not surprise some members of the Committee on decolonization.

As regards the Constitution's reassuring statement about the future, we may have our differences with the colonial Power, but we believe they will honour the pledge in the preamble: that they will not transfer us to the Kingdom of Spain against our wishes. We have seen what happened in Western Sahara, which at a time when there was a dictatorship in Spain, was transferred to Morocco without the people of Western Sahara having been consulted.

We do not believe that Spain itself would be particularly keen to see this happen. I have to say for the record that Mr. Fernando Moran, a man for whom I have great admiration - although I did not agree with the Brussels

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agreement, which he was instrumental in reaching - said on one occasion that if Gibraltar was handed to Spain on a plate with the Gibraltarians totally opposed to the transfer, this would not be a good deal for Spain. Realistically, I do not think we are talking about a situation today, with a democratic Spain, where they would wish to take us over, as it were, by force, or that the United Kingdom Government would hand us over lock, stock and barrel with the people up in arms.

Members must know that, short of that, there are many ways of putting pressure on a small Territory with limited resources. Therefore, we feel that it is in this Committee that we will find the largest sympathetic audience. This is where we have to make our plea for support, and where at the end of the day I would come to complain about the United Kingdom: my position is that if I were tomorrow to have a fundamental difference of view with the colonial Power, it seems to me that under Article 73 of the Charter places on the administering Power the responsibility to report to this Committee on its trusteeship. That is my safeguard; not just the preamble to our Constitution.

Mr. VISWANATHAN (India): I welcome the presence of the Chief Minister, Mr. Bossano, who has impressed us with his very powerful line of argument, which certainly deserves consideration by the Committee.

I have a very small question to ask him. In the working paper the Royal Navy Commander of the British Forces in Gibraltar is quoted as saying that Gibraltar will continue to be important as a "staying post for the Royal Navy" (A/AC.109/1164, para. 26). How does Mr. Bossano visualize the differences in the future relationship with the United Kingdom, particularly in the light of that kind of statement?

The CHAIRMAN: Does Chief Minister Bossano care to comment?

Mr. BOSSANO: I think members will be aware that the size of the Royal Navy is diminishing almost by the week. Assuming that by the year 2000 there is still a Royal Navy and that we are still a colony, then presumably they will still be making use of our facilities free. Certainly, the naval base is today a mere shadow of what it was in its heyday. It is used primarily as a refueling place; repair of military vessels no longer takes place in Gibraltar. We have a commercial, private ship-repair yard; the property is owned by the Government of Gibraltar and we have leased it to a Norwegian operator.

The role of the base in Gibraltar is really in the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) rather than of the British Royal Navy. I myself am highly skeptical of the statements made about the continuing future: in 1980 the United Kingdom Government announced that we had a guaranteed future for the then naval dockyard. In 1981 they published a defence white paper announcing cuts, and by 1984 the place was closed and we had to reopen it, at vast expense, ourselves.

Navies of other NATO countries make use of the base. I might note that we have only had one instance of the Spanish military making use of Gibraltar; that was recently, when there was a technical problem with one of their aircraft and it landed at Gibraltar airport. But at the end of the day, we all belong to the same club.

The CHAIRMAN: In the absence of any further questions or comments, I should like to thank Chief Minister Bossano for his statement and for the information he has just provided to the Committee.

The petitioner withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Spain.

Mr. FERNANDEZ PITA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Committee for agreeing to Spain's request to participate in this debate. We are grateful to the Secretariat for preparing Working Paper A/AC.109/1164, on the question of Gibraltar, which reflects the viewpoints of the authorities of my country and the information they submitted.

The United Nations has established with utter clarity the doctrine applicable to Gibraltar, indicating in many General Assembly resolutions that the decolonization of that Territroy is not a question of self-determination but rather one of restoring Spain's territorial integrity. In this respect, British and Spanish authorities have been holding bilateral negotiations in order to resolve the dispute over Gibraltar in accordance with the doctrine established by the United Nations. The last meeting, at the level of Foreign Ministers, as was mentioned by Chief Minister Bossano, was held in Madrid last 1 March.

In particular, in connection with the reference made by the Chief Minister of Gibraltar concerning the creation of a new State, I should like to recall that this possibility is contemplated neither in the United Nations resolutions nor in the bilateral agreements between the United Kingdom and Spain. In this context, the United Kingdom, the administering Power internationally responsible for the Territory, recognizes that the limitation of its capacity to have sovereignty over Gibraltar, established by the Treaty of Utrecht, is both valid and currently in force, and it has consequently

(Mr. Fernández Pita, Spain)

declared on many occasions that the independence of Gibraltar is not an option. This is true both in the framework of its diplomatic relations with Spain and in its contacts with the local authorities of Gibraltar, and it has been stated by Ministers and Prime Ministers in the House of Commons and in the communications media. Furthermore, on a number of occasions, the Spanish authorities have shown their willingness to ensure due respect for the interests of the population of Gibraltar, while also taking very much into account those of Campo de Gibraltar.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to reserve the right to transmit at a later date to the Committee whatever considerations are appropriate in order to specify the Spanish position in connection with some of the statements made today before this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further speakers, and taking into account the related developments, I wish to suggest that the Committee continue consideration of this question at its next session, subject to any directives which the General Assembly may wish to give at its forty-eighth session, and that, so as to facilitate the Fourth Committee's consideration of the item, the Committee transmit to the Assembly all related documentation.

If I hear no objection, I shall take that the Committee agrees to this suggestion.

It was so decided.

QUESTION OF WESTERN SAHARA (A/AC.109/1163)

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the decision taken at our previous meeting, the Committee granted a request for hearing to Mr. Boukhari Ahmed of the Frente POLISARIO.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Boukhari Ahmed (Frente POLISARIO) took a place at the petitioners' table.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Ahmed.

Mr. AHMED (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Frente POLISARIO I wish to thank the members of the Committee for allowing me to present to them the Sahraoui point of view regarding the situation in Western Sahara, in the light of the evolution of the peace process put together by the international community.

The most substantial evolution is undoubtedly marked by Security Council resolution 809 (1993) of 2 March this year, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's recent visit to the region and the soon-to-be-held direct dialogue between the two parties to the conflict.

Security Council resolution 809 (1993) constituted, in the view of the Frente POLISARIO, significant support for the validity of the peace plan and made it possible to prevent the collapse of the peace process, given the direction it had taken since December 1991.

As is well known, on 19 December 1991 the previous Secretary-General, just a few days before leaving his post, amended, without consulting with the two parties, the most substantial clause of the original plan, which had been the subject of prior agreement between the two parties to the conflict.

Under this unilateral amendment, the electorate for the referendum would no longer be established on the basis of the census conducted in 1974 by the former administering Power, but rather on the basis of a new set of identification criteria that opens the door to massive fraud in the composition of the list of voters.

Under these criteria, any citizen of any country of the Maghreb can claim to have his origins in the Territory by claiming that his ancestors were born

(Mr. Ahmed)

in Western Sahara at the end of the last century. Morocco, the occupying Power of the Territory, says that among its population there are tens of thousands of descendants of Sahraouis, and it offers as evidence the oral testimony of elders and tribal heads that Morocco also wishes to designate.

The opportunity thus given to the Power that is illegally occupying the Territory to determine in advance the results of the referendum is compounded by other advantages acquired during the preparation of the plan, advantages that mean the possibility of maintaining in the Territory all the military, administrative and civil occupation structures.

Hence, the implementation of the peace plan was blocked because of this amendment of the clause relating to the electorate and its replacement by a number of criteria that would give the occupying Power the means to dictate that the results of the referendum would be in favour of its annexation of the Territory.

The background to the question profoundly affects how the United Nations is going to assume its responsibilites in a decolonization process whose culmination must be judged by the international community and the people of the Territory to be a clean and irreproachable operation.

(Mr. Ahmed)

Nothing has changed with respect to the question of Western Sahara. It was and remains a problem of decolonization, even if the colonizer is not European. Faced with foreign occupation, a people is paying a high price for its right to self-determination; it would be a harsh blow to the credibility of the United Nations and to this Committee's principles if self-determination were to be exercised by the people of the Territory's occupying Power.

Early in 1993 the Secretary-General, after a year of work, submitted to the Security Council the report contained in document S/25170. Its annex contains the interpretation by the parties of the criteria for eligibility to vote, as introduced by the previous Secretary-General, and their views on the proof of Sahraoui origin that every putative Sahraoui among the tens of thousands named by Morocco must provide.

The views on these two questions differ greatly. Morocco's position is based largely on oral testimony, which is neither reliable nor accurate; given the political circumstances, such testimony can be fabricated or manipulated.

In his report, the Secretary-General presented to the Security Council three options to unblock the situation. The first is the continuation and intensification of talks between the two parties. But in his report the Secretary-General offers the view that the chances for success under this option are very slim.

The second is immediate implementation of the referendum on the basis of the criteria defined by the previous Secretary-General. The Secretary-General notes in his report that this might mean that one of the parties would not participate in the referendum.

The third option is to abandon the settlement plan and adopt an alternative approach.

(Mr. Ahmed)

After a month of intense negotiations, the Security Council adopted resolution 809 (1993) of 2 March 1993, in which it stated its inclination towards the first option, thus avoiding any action that could lead either to a unilateral referendum supported only by the occupying Power or to the end of the settlement plan.

Resolution 809 (1993) basically defined two focal points for action before the referendum is organized for the end of this year. First, the United Nations would commence registration of Sahraouis whose names appear on the 1974 census list and, secondly, the Secretary-General would intensify his efforts to resolve the differences on other criteria for voter identification.

In the first area, the process has not yet begun because the Government of Morocco has not responded to United Nations requirements on immunity for observers from the two parties and on updating the list of Western Sahara leaders elected in 1973.

With respect to the second area, the Secretary-General traveled in the region at the begining of June, which enabled him to hold talks with top leaders of Morocco and of the Frente POLISARIO. The Secretary-General submitted to the two parties a proposal on the way he thought it might be possible to overcome their differences, and he asked the two parties to respond immediately.

On 16 June, the Frente POLISARIO submitted its official response to the Secretary-General. It is too early to speak in detail of the Secretary-General's document and of the Sahraoui response, for we do not want to hinder the ongoing efforts at negotiations. But I can say that while the document was far from satisfactory to the Sahraouis, the Frento POLISARIO considered it in a sincere spirit of cooperation.

(Mr. Ahmed)

The response of the Frente POLISARIO shows a maximal effort to be politically imaginative in order to help the mission the Security Council entrusted to the Secretary-General achieve success, and to reaffirm the validity of the settlement plan as the only possible peaceful solution for this long, anachronistic decolonization conflict.

In the coming days there will be an important meeting in the capital of Western Sahara between a Frente POLISARIO delegation and a Moroccan delegation. We have agreed to meet in Laayoune, at the headquarters of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), as an earnest of our sincere will to spare no effort to seek understanding and compromise with a view to removing, on the basis of agreement between the two parties, the present obstacles to the plan's implementation.

I want to reiterate here that we want the two parties to go arm in arm towards the organization of a credible referendum - not just any referendum. Nothing and no one can replace the will of the people of Western Sahara and its right to the free and safe expression of its right of self-determination. Only a genuine referendum meeting all the conditions for a free vote can be viewed as unassailable. It is the only way to strengthen the credibility of the United Nations and to strengthen peace and stability in the region.

That is why, as I convey to this Committee the gratitude of the people of Western Sahara, I want to ask the Committee on decolonization to continue to give the highest priority to this process of decolonization until it reaches its logical and natural conclusion.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Mr. Ahmed for the information he has furnished to the Committee.

Does any member wish to comment or put questions to Mr. Ahmed?

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): I thank Mr. Ahmed for his statement on developments in the situation and in the process of preparing for the referendum in the Territory of Western Sahara. My delegation heard his appeal for priority support by this Committee for the holding of the referendum to be organized by the United Nations.

The working paper before the Committee on this item notes, in paragraph 39, that a representative of the Frente POLISARIO has said that the Frente POLISARIO had no more reservations about the criteria drawn up by Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Yet to the best of my knowledge, those criteria for determining voter eligibility were a factor blocking the process towards a referendum.

The first part of my question is whether that statement in paragraph 39 of document A/AC.109/1163 is accurate. The second part is, if so, what can this bring to the settlement process and what difficulties still stand in the way?

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Ahmed.

Mr. AHMED (interpretation from Spanish): I am grateful to be asked to speak again and for the interest expressed by the representative of Mali.

I did not want to go into detail on the contents of the working paper on Western Sahara now before the Committee. I believe that it represents an exhaustive effort to inform the Committee of substantive developments. There are some unimportant inaccuracies. There is also a lack of documentation on the part of the Frente POLISARIO, because we find it difficult to have our documents circulated officially in the United Nations.

As far as paragraph 39 is concerned, I should like to inform the representative of Mali that it should be read together with paragraph 38. In other words, the problem of these criteria submitted by Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar has two sides. One is that the two parties had agreed, after five years of negotiations, on a way of solving the problem of the indeterminacy of the electoral body. We are a desert land populated by nomads and it would be very easy for anyone, from Tunisia or Egypt, for example, to claim to be originally from Western Sahara. Thus, in order to avoid the risks inherent in searching for people to exercise their self-determination, the two parties agreed - and this was the wonder of the peace plan - that the electoral body be composed of those Sahraouis listed in the census, a total of 74,000 people. That was the miracle of the plan. But when we began to implement the plan, at the instance of the Moroccans that clause was changed and six new criteria for identification were introduced.

What is the problem? The problem with those criteria is that there is no reliable scientific means of determining evidence. I should like to draw the attention of the representative of Mali to the fact that it might be possible today, for example, for thousands upon thousands of Moroccan citizens to

(Mr. Ahmed)

participate in the referendum, claiming that their parents were born somewhere in the desert of the Western Sahara in 1910. How is it possible to prove this? Morocco points to the heads of tribes, but I do not believe that the heads of tribes are hospital midwives or that they were present at the birth of every person in Western Sahara. We do not believe that tribal chiefs can provide reliable evidence. If a man of 80 should claim that he was born precisely in 1902, could a tribal chief testify to that? That is the vulnerable point which admits the possibility of fraud.

Thus, paragraphs 38 and 39 should be read jointly. The problem does not lie in the question of criteria but in how to apply those criteria. If we allow oral testimony and if we allow the tribal chiefs to be designated by one party to the conflict, we will have an electoral body determined in advance with a view to producing certain results for the referendum.

In order to help the Secretary-General, the Sahraoui position was to conclude the debate on the criteria put forward by Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar. But how can we implement them? The debate on the means of implementation is not yet over. Thus, in response to the question put by Mali, I believe that there has been considerable political support for the action taken by the Secretary-General, and we hope that will be interpreted as nothing but an attempt to be helful. In other words, we believe in a referendum but not in just any referendum. The method of defining the electoral body and determining who is really a Sahraoui is a very complex operation which must be followed with the utmost care and concern by the United Nations.

Mr. VISWANATHAN (India): I wish to thank the representative of POLISARIO, who has given us a detailed account of recent developments. We understand the complexities and difficulties at the heart of the problem, which is the identification of voters.*

My delegation welcomes the direct contacts between POLISARIO and Morocco and it supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to find a compromise solution to this issue.

The CHAIRMAN: Does Mr. Ahmed wish to respond?

Mr. AHMED (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of India and I understand his message of support. We all want to support the Secretary-General in his efforts and mission for peace. In the direct dialogue that is to take place, the most important thing is that it should take place. We have agreed that it will take place in the area which we consider to be illegally occupied by Morocco. That agreement represents an effort to be cooperative and helpful to the dialogue.

What we would wish for is a serious dialogue capable of resolving problems and that the delegations of the parties come to those talks inspired by good faith and a readiness to do serious work, and that there be no formalities attached to the talks that might hinder the substance of the dialogue, which is of prime importance. Logically, it is impossible to understand that a peace plan organized by the United Nations, approved by the Security Council, and supported by the General Assembly, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity should not lead to negotiations and talks between the parties. This is a legal, political and historical

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* The Chairman returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Ahmed)

situation that must be put to an end. We believe that peace and the very credibility of the United Nations will be enhanced by its success. We have great hope for this dialogue, but it cannot be mere dialogue for its own sake. It needs to be substantive so as to help the United Nations and the Security Council to break through the current impasse.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further comments, I should like, on behalf of the Committee, to thank the representative of the Frente POLISARIO for his statement.

The petitioner withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN: May I take it that, taking into account the related developments, and subject to any directives which the General Assembly might give in that connection at its forty-eighth session, and in order to facilitate the work of the Fourth Committee in its consideration of the question, the Special Committee decides to transmit to the General Assembly all relevant documentation and to conclude its current consideration of this item?

It was so decided.

REPORT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR TO REVIEW THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE SMALL ISLAND NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES, HELD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM, AT PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, FROM 8 TO 10 JUNE 1993 (A/AC.109/1159)

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the representative of Portugal wishes to make a statement in connection with this report, and I now call on him.

Mr. RIBEIRO-TELLES (Portugal): I want to reiterate very briefly what we said at previous meetings concerning the adoption of this report, and to convey the surprise and perplexity of my Government at not seeing a single reference in the report to the question of East Timor. We were invited to participate in the seminar as administering Power; we participated in the Port Moresby and Vanuatu seminars; we made statements on the question of East Timor; yet the report reflects nothing of what was discussed at the seminar on that question.

The CHAIRMAN: The record of this meeting will reflect the statement made by the representative of Portugal.

In connection with the above-mentioned statement, in relation to the question of East Timor I wish to point out that the presence and participation of Portugal and by a petitioner from East Timor, who participated fully, are noted in annex III, which contains a list of participants.

I call on the representative of Portugal.

Mr. RIBEIRO-TELLES (Portugal): You mentioned the list of participants, Mr. Chairman. We are, of course, included in that list as administering Power, but the reader will wonder of which Non-Self-Governing Territory. The report refers to statements made concerning other Non-Self-Governing Territories such as American Samoa, Guam and Tokelau, but says not a word about East Timor.

(Mr. Ribeiro-Telles, Portugal)

Since you raised the question, Sir, we were also surprised to see that the list of participating non-governmental organizations gives Portugal as the country of the National Council of Maubere Resistance; I do not think it is a Portuguese resistance movement: it is an East Timor organization.

The CHAIRMAN: As no other member wishes to comment on the report, may I take it that the Committee approves the report (A/AC.109/1159) and takes note of its summary of discussions and recommendations?

It was so decided.

REPORTS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES, PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

QUESTIONS OF AMERICAN SAMOA, ANGUILLA, BERMUDA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, CAYMAN ISLANDS, GUAM, MONTSERRAT, TOKELAU, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS (A/AC.109/L.1796)

QUESTION OF PITCAIRN (A/AC.109/L.1799)

QUESTION OF ST. HELENA (A/AC.109/L.1800)

Mr. BANGALI (Sierra Leone): It is very clear to my delegation that some Non-Self-Governing Territories need the Special Committee of 24. But it is also clear to us that other Territories do not need the Committee. In our view, a case in point is American Samoa. I would refer members to paragraphs 25 to 31 of the report (A/AC.109/1159) of the Port Moresby seminar, which the Committee has just adopted. It is clear from the statement of the Lieutenant-Governor of American Samoa that the people of American Samoa are satisfied with the status quo. They have quality education; they have the most doctoral degrees per capita in the South Pacific; they have excellent medical services. They also own and control their own land, something for which the inhabitants of most other Territories are clamouring. The people have expressed the wish to remain American Samoans.

(Mr. Bangali, Sierra Leone)

I wonder if there is any point in retaining American Samoa on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, since it is the expressed wish of the American Samoans to remain as they are. Would it therefore not be proper for us to have one fewer United States Territory to deal with? We believe it would facilitate gaining the cooperation we seek from the United States if one of its Territories were removed from the list.

Increasingly, the Committee is being told to mind its own business. Interestingly, it is being told this by people from Territories the Committee has been fighting for. A couple of months ago a delegation from one Territory as much as told us that they did not need a Visiting Mission in their Territory: "We do not want you". It is as though we were fighting a battle for someone who turns around and tells us to mind our own business.

We suggest that the Committee review its list of Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to concentrating its efforts on the Territories that actually need the Committee, rather than dealing with a list of Territories many of which tell us that they are satisfied with the status quo and sometimes even put impediments in the way of the work of Committee members.

In sum, we think it would be useful, first, to remove American Samoa from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories and, secondly, to review the entire list.

Mr. MWAMBULUKUTU (United Republic of Tanzania): In the light of the statement by my colleague from Sierra Leone, I seek clarification on who exactly has the mandate to designate a Territory as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. If we took the proposal of the representative of Sierra Leone seriously, we would have nothing to discuss: every time a report is prepared on these Territories, we are told that they are not really interested in

(Mr. Mwambulukutu, United Republic of Tanzania)

independence this time around, but would like some kind of free association. Maybe that is why the administering Powers do not bother with our work.

Is this our job, or should we recommend to the General Assembly that there is no further need for decolonization?

I do not think we should let this situation stand as it is; we should look at it more seriously before we proceed any further.

Mr. BANGALI (Sierra Leone): You noticed, Sir, that I specifically mentioned American Samoa in my statement, because this is the first time that a high-level representative from that Territory actually attended and participated in a seminar, and delivered a statement. It may be very true that some of the Territories want to retain a connection with the administering Powers, but it is the view of this delegation that, if an elected representative of a Territory comes before a Committee or a seminar and tells you that that Territory is happy to maintain its friendship or relationship with the administering Power, then I think the onus rests on this Committee to review the list properly.

We should not be hypocritical; we should look at things clearly. Certain Territories want the assistance of this Committee, but others do not. So why do we retain them on the list? I believe that the fewer Territories we have on the list that are serious about achieving independence, the better and more effectively this Committee will work. We are proposing this so that we can make a recommendation to the General Assembly; or the Working Group, if it is so inclined, can review its list and then make a recommendation to the General Assembly. I do not believe that simply having 10 or more Territories on the list will serve any purpose if in a few months someone else comes before this Committee to tell us to mind our own business.

The CHAIRMAN: In view of the proposal and the complexities the proposal of the representative of Sierra Leone presents for the Committee, and noting that some members of the Committee who were present at the Seminar may have had some signal from the Territory concerned, the Committee will continue consideration of the reports relating to the Territories at a subsequent meeting. This will allow more time for consultations between members. Furthermore, the members of the South Pacific Forum may wish to consult with

(The Chairman)

their colleagues and return to this Committee for a decision on this matter. If that is the desire of the Committee, and I see no objection, then we shall proceed accordingly.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): I should merely like a clarification. Does your conclusion concern all the Territories entrusted to our Committee or does it concern only the Territory referred to by the delegation of Sierra Leone?

The CHAIRMAN: Even though reference was made to one specific Territory, the fact that the conclusion was drawn from consideration of the Pacific report, that we also have reports on three other seminars in both the Pacific and the Caribbean regions, and that some of these findings must be translated into decisions of the Committee, it would be useful to allow members to look them over and see if anything can be included with the reports and draft decisions and resolutions before us. Certainly, not all the Territories in the consolidated resolution are concerned; and perhaps it is only in the case of American Samoa. But in order to allow for any other comments in relation to other Territories, it might be useful to delay discussion and consideration at this time so that we might take up the draft consolidated resolution as a whole rather than part of it.

If there are no further comments, I shall take it that the Committee is in agreement with the proposal I have just made.

It was so decided.

QUESTION OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION (A/AC.109/L.1797)

The CHAIRMAN: May I take it that the Committee adopts the report (A/AC.109/L.1797) and endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained therein?

It was so decided.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): My delegation fully supports the recommendations contained in the document we have just considered, namely A/AC.109/L.1797, as we are a member of the Subcommittee and of the full Committee. We would like to draw the Committee's attention to certain suggestions made at the Pacific Regional Seminar, the report on which was just adopted, which might facilitate the implementation of those recommendations.

We were extremely happy with the willingness of several media organizations at the Seminar to act as relays for the Special Committee and the Department of Public Information in disseminating information on the prevailing situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and on United Nations activities in that field. Therefore, my delegation would like to make the following proposal.

There do exist means - traditional vehicles - that are used by the United Nations to disseminate information, but to our great surprise we noted that this United Nations effort does not reach very far. This is something we discovered at our meetings with representatives of the various Territories. Therefore, we propose that in conjunction with the traditional methods - that is to say, the various United Nations Centres in the regions, which perhaps do not have adequate financial and human resources to disseminate the information - the Department of Public Information, through our Secretariat, contact various media organizations, so that the latter can also contribute to the further dissemination of the United Nations message on decolonization. This is therefore more of a practical proposal as to how we should deal with the dissemination of information rather than one on the conclusions and recommendations made here, which, of course, also touch on that issue.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to request a clarification as to whether or not the representative of Mali would, in connection with his proposal, like this to be discussed in connection with the report that has just been adopted, or perhaps some other approach? What I would like to know is whether that representative is asking the Committee to take any further action beyond the report it has just adopted.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): I was saying that the text we adopted actually deals theoretically with everything I just mentioned, so there is no difficulty as far as the text goes. The context is there, all the factors are there. The issue is using non-governmental organizations, regional organizations and independent media to ensure that information is disseminated. My message is thus addressed mainly to our Secretariat, to the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information, to urge them to make increasing use - in conjunction with the more traditional channels - of the new, more independent channels that offered their services during the Seminar, which was held, Sir, in your lovely country.

I recall that the representative of the Associated Press for the Asian region, who is based in Australia gave an outstanding presentation on this question of information vehicles, including proposals. For instance, his text might serve as a sort of inspiration, and he might even be contacted in order to identify networks in the region so as to allow for the flow of information in both directions. That is what I had meant. It is not a matter of initiating any action, any text or any draft resolution on our part.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Mali for the clarification he has made to his proposal.

(The Chairman)

I understand that the matter will be taken up by the Secretariat. In addition, I would volunteer to follow up on this question, as I have a very strong feeling that United Nations information networks in our region, where these Territories are located, are completely ineffective. Testimony to this effect was given by the territorial representatives at the Seminar.

The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of this item.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Tomorrow, the Committee will take up the item relating to Puerto Rico and will hear the representatives of organizations. To date, 38 communications containing requests for hearing have been received. I would therefore request members to be punctual.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.